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ABSTRACT

Guidelines are presented to provide advice on the development of national and regional research collections of children's literature and reading materials for use by library professionals. Following a brief introduction on the advantages of such collections, their organization, financing, staffing, and goals, this paper offers suggestions for selection, arrangement, and cataloging of materials and presents services and research sources for children's libraries. A list of some existing centers and four references are included. (EAA)

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CHILDREN'S LITERATURE RESEARCH COLLECTIONS:
SERVICES AND RESEARCH FOR CHILDREN'S LIBRARIES

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Children's literature research collections: services and research for children's libraries

INTRODUCTION

In 1965 Virginia Haviland, the first chairperson of the "Round Table of Librarians Representing Documentation Centres Serving Research on Children's Literature", wrote an article in the October issue of "The Quarterly Journal of the Library of Congress" pp. 1-16, with the title "Serving those who serve children"; (a national reference library of children's books). The idea:

"Serving those who serve children" is not only important for the Children's Literature Center of the Library of Congress in Washington. It could be the ideal of all those librarians and others, who work in Documentation/Research Centres all over the world, connected with children's literature and library work.

Why start a Children's Literature Research Collection?

What is a research collection?

In a research collection the old and contemporary children's book production and professional literature of a country are recorded and investigated.

In a research collection also representative examples of children's literature and professional literature of other countries are collected and investigated. It provides materials about children's literature and reading for research.

Children's literature as a part of the national literature of the country needs a specific treatment, because of the special readers: the children, and the different points of view of the authors, for instance psychological, pedagogical, sociological, artistic, political etc.

A research collection can be an important information - research - and documentation centre for the whole country, or area and it avoids needless duplicating of services on local level.

Often a centre like this does not do research itself, but it initiates and stimulates research.

A national institute can work together with government agencies, scholars, librarians, educators, publishers, writers, illustrators and all kinds of persons and institutes on national and international level.

ORGANIZATION

The organization of these institutes depends on the local circumstances in the country, or area.

Some of the existing children's books institutes are independent organizations with an own board.

This can facilitate decisions about work philosophy and special activities.

Other institutes are part of a university: research and teaching are goals.

Several institutes are special departments of a national or state library.

Occasionally a children's book specialist works within a national library.

A national library gets free copies from "all" books for adults and children, which are published in a country.

It happens that in the beginning the children's books received no special treatment in the national library and are not accessible to the general public.

The first task of the specialist is then to select and sort out these children's books and to promote access to these national deposit collections.

One institute is a special section within a national library of education (a scientific library), another is a special section of a public library.

Some are a department of a national library organization.

Being a department or section of a larger organization, mostly a library, can be most useful.

The institute can use several services of the larger organization like: the printing office, administrative services, bookbinding, catalogue materials and all kinds of technical provisions.

One institute is a department of the National Library School.

Several of the existing institutes are also the national sections of the IBBY (International Board on Books for Young People).

These are several existing structures of organizations for such centres.

It is not unthinkable that in the future very different structures of organizations will come into being.

FINANCES

It is necessary to have a budget for the financing of the building, books and other materials, activities and last but not least the staff members.

- There are some institutes which are entirely dependent on gifts.

This can be very dangerous for the continuation of the work and the completeness of the collections. It seems much better to be only partly dependent on gifts.

In the first place it is advisable to secure state-aid and then it is helpful if editors, youth organizations, educational and cultural organizations etc. give their additional financial contributions.

Gifts are always welcome also in state-aided institutions.

One institution has a Circle of Friends from all over the world, who contribute by book gifts and money.

Book gifts need to be selected and to be catalogued and you also need money for that.

It is important to have or to make an arrangement how to procure the national deposit copies of all contemporary children's books for the institute. An arrangement like this will be easy to realize for those centres, which are a section, or a department of a national or state library.

In several cases the national library agreed, when the children's books specialist wanted to select the children's books for his special collections. In many other cases publishers send free copies of their own book production.

In some cases the institutes have to pay for professional literature.

STAFF

Mary Ørvig mentioned in her lecture for the first Workshop of the Round Table in Wales in 1979 "Education and basic knowledge" important basic knowledge or skills, which can be required from staff members in national centres. The basic knowledge, or skills she mentioned were:

- a solid library education
- knowledge of materials concerned (children's literature and professional literature)
- knowledge of languages
- knowledge of one's own country's resources in children's books.

Of course in-service-training of staff members is also very important.

However, it can be very useful to have staff members with other specializations like linguists and others, perhaps researchers with different backgrounds.

One might think about temporary exchange of staff members with institutions in other countries (sabbatical year). That clerical staff also is essential is a matter of course.

Objectives and goals of existing centres

The objectives are not only:

- to be the national information/documentation and research centre
- to give service on national level
- to promote access to national deposit collections of children's literature

But in several cases there are more concrete goals, or responsibilities:

- to promote children's books and children's books production (in some cases

even the editing of children's books, or translating them into other languages)

- to stimulate the growth of children's libraries and to improve the services of children's libraries
- to promote the knowledge and distribution of national book production in the own country and abroad
- to provide information and bibliographic service in the field of children's literature
- to promote research and teaching in children's literature
- to present representative collections of (old) children's books of a certain country (and period)
- to preserve and documentate juvenile literature and inform about it on international level
- to serve children directly in connection with the information for researchers

II Materials in a Children's Literature Research Collection and how to select, arrange and catalogue them

Collections

The collections of the centres will mainly consist of children's books and professional literature

Children's books

In the first place the collection usually will include contemporary and old fiction and non-fiction for children.

Some centres have a representative collection of these books, other aim at completeness, for instance all prints of the Enid Blyton- books.

Attention should be paid to children's books from a special language area in the country, which ought to be included.

Another feature are special editions like toy books, games, manuscript material, trash, original art work from today and the past.

Should the centre collect all this material, or make a selection and emphasise special items?

A decision has to be made and depends on the fact, if other institutions in the country collect this material.

Another aspect are the school text books. One centre, which is a department of a National Library of Education, includes these books, because in this country the distinction between a school book and non-fiction is rather vague. Important are the contacts and mutual arrangements with other institutions, which might collect special materials like children's magazines and old children's books from a certain period.

Duplication of all this material is mostly impossible and unnecessary. Usually a selection from fiction (and non-fiction) from other countries is included in the collection.

This concerns editions, for instance translations, which are important for comparison.

Professional literature

Professional literature on children's literature and children's library work includes mostly materials in the main languages.

- Professional literature consists of books (quick reference, doctoral theses and other Special literature).

Often an exchange program with editions of other centres takes place.

- Periodicals dealing with the subject field and articles from general periodicals.
- Newspaper cuttings. There are in many countries commercial houses, which make the first selection of articles from newspapers, on any requested subject.

Arrangement of books.

The arrangements on the shelves can be done on different ways:

- classification by size
- shelf arrangement for open access
- Chronological arrangement
- systematical arrangement or, arrangement by subjects
- alphabetical arrangement by authors
- arrangement for closed access
- fixed location, or absolute location.

The arrangement depends on the kind of collections and each special situation.

For whatever arrangement one chooses might be important, however, more important for researchers and others who expect to find information are the different catalogues.

Catalogues

For each Children's Literature Research Collection it is essential to have many catalogue entries, or different kinds of catalogues.

A very detailed description is certainly necessary for old children's books.

A printed catalogue (with regularly appearing supplements) might also be extremely useful in that case.

It is possible and advisable to have many catalogue cards of one book

- First of all tracing cards, which indicate all different entries.
These entries can be on:
 - author
 - title
 - subject
 - genre
 - illustrator, engraver, illustrator of the wrapper
 - graphic artist
 - translator
 - series
 - editor
 - publisher
 - printer
 - year of edition
 - writer of the preface and foreword
 - country of origin

These catalogues are essential for all kinds of research and information, although it takes a lot of time to maintain them.

Documentation of Professional Literature

The main task of the documentation of professional literature can be to produce materials for information, reviewing, study, research and publications.

Periodicals

Documentation is not to index articles and make short abstracts; documentation is not only the analysis of articles from periodicals, but also bibliographical control of all kinds of publications. However, the documentation of periodicals is indispensable because of the up-to-dateness of the information.

Some possibilities are:

- making abstracts from articles

Documentation of:

- awards of children's books
- reviews of professional literature
- book lists
- books of the own country, which are translated in other countries
- biographical material about authors, illustrators, publishers etc.

Tracing new material can be done by using the snowball method (following the references quoted in a recent article and then the references found therein) can be sometimes advisable, sometimes not because of the arbitrary choice of the authors. More useful can be to consult abstract journals, library catalogues, bibliographies, reviews, and (foreign) colleagues).

Newspaper cuttings

These can be documented in the same way as the periodicals.

Special literature

Professional books usually are classified and annotated.

Chapters and fragments from books can be classified separately.

It is advisable to have also several catalogues of the professional literature, for instance on:

- author
- title
- subject/genre

In a way a liable documentation of professional literature is already a kind of research.

Certainly it supports research and makes research possible and easier.

III Services and Research for Children's Libraries

Until now there is no Children's Literature Research Centre, which only works for children's libraries and perhaps there will never be one.

In the first Workshop of the Round Table 1979 (mentioned on pp. 3) there were representatives of several centres, which have very special links with children's libraries.

These centres are:

Brazil Fundação Nacional do Livro Infantil e Juvenil

Rio de Janeiro

This non-profit organization was formed to encourage better books for children and young people.

Canada Children's Literature Service, Public Services Branch, National Library of Canada

Wellington

Bilingual service, which advises and assists libraries and librarians in the field of service to children.

Canada Osborne and Lillian H. Smith Collections, Boys and Girls House,
Toronto

These special collections of old and contemporary children's books are located, maintained and added to in an independent branch of Toronto Public Library.

France La Joie par les Livres
Paris

Is a department of the École Nationale Supérieure des Bibliothèques and is related to all French public libraries.

Netherlands

Dienst Boek en Jeugd NBLC

The Hague

Is a department of the National association for Public Libraries; formerly Bureau Boek en Jeugd.

More details about this Workshop of the Round Table 1979 will be published in IFLA Journal 6 (1980) no. 4.

The activities and services of these centres are very different from each other.

The contacts with the children's librarians are very important because these librarians work with children and the contemporary literature.

In this last part of my talk I will mention some of the services and "research" for children's libraries and others.

"Research" can be seen as the result of scientific work, or in a broader sense "1. a diligent seeking of facts or principles. 2. Investigation (The University English dictionary; ed. by R.F. Patterson. London, University Books, c. 1977).

The word "Research", which includes the word "Search" will be used here as the result of thinking, selecting, planning, writing and advising. As already said, documentation can be considered as a form of research on the preparation of research.

Another kind of research are publications.

Publications

All kinds of publications can be realized with the help, Support and contributions of children's librarians, specialists on many subjects and researchers in the country.

- Book reviews
- Professional periodicals
- Publications about authors, illustrators
- Professional books, or monographs
- List of available lectures in the country
- Bibliographies of the collections of professional literature in the centres (includes articles in periodicals and special literature).
- International bibliographies of professional literature
- Bibliographies of old children's books
- Bibliographies of special, contemporary collections of children's books
- Periodicals for children
- Book lists, reading programs
- Children's Book Week materials
- 7 Annual guide of children's books, like Elaine Moss. Children's books of the year.
- Portfolios with article cuttings on authors/illustrators, with book reviews and biographical material
- Portfolios on special subjects
- Literature reports, theses, dissertations
- In some cases even children's books

Exhibitions

Some centers organize displays on special subjects in their own building, for instance about book illustration.

Annotated catalogues and posters of these displays are mostly available, there.

Other centres supply exhibitions to public libraries.

Sometimes these are fully prepared displays with decorated exhibition boards, which give an impression of books for children from different ages; books about special subjects for instance fairy tales, family stories.

Advises and information for children's libraries

Several children's books specialists in the national centres have the task, to start, or to improve the children's library work in the country.

This can be done on several ways, some methods are already mentioned.

Other possibilities are:

- by organizing courses on children's literature and children's library work
- by recommending the acquisition of children's literature
- by organizing or stimulating meetings for children's librarians
- by visiting libraries and conferences in the own country and abroad
- by writing for national and international publications about children's literature and children's library work
- by answering inquiries about children's literature and children's library work

- by providing materials for activities, and bibliographical tools for children's libraries
- by co-ordinating all kinds of activities for children's libraries

Research on Children's Library Work

It would be thinkable that national Children's Literature Centres would organize, initiate, or co-ordinate research into special aspects of children's library work, because they often have to advise children's libraries.

Research could be made about subjects as:

- general children's library services
- categories of children's books, which are needed and do not exist yet
- categories of books which are not enough represented
- which kind of books do children of a certain age-group prefer
- what kind of children are users of the library, which children are not? How about minority-groups?
- do former members of the children's library also stay member of the department for adults.
Why, and why not
- what kind of new materials for activities and bibliographical tools are necessary
- how is the co-operation with the (young) adults department
- how do children's libraries in the country work together with other institutions

These are some of the possible services and research for children's libraries which the national centres could offer.

Another task of the centres is not only to be the national information/documentation/research center, but also to serve as a link in an international referral network. But that would be a good subject for another session

Alice Geradts

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